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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this guide is to offer possible answers to questions concerning popular culture that teachers might have and to offer suggestions on utilizing popular culture materials that are available. Lesson plans are presented using materials from advertising, newspapers, comics, film, television, popular music, radio, popular literature, sports, and a miscellaneous category including things that are part of a student's world. Included also is a bibliography of resource materials from each interest area. (AEA)

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A GUIDE TO USING POPULAR CULTURE

TO TEACH COMPOSITION

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Introduction

What is popular culture? Is it something that is here today and gone tomorrow? Would there be any possible use for it in today's classroom? These are questions that teachers everywhere are asking themselves. The answers to these questions are often a matter of personal preference or prejudice.

The purpose of this guide is two-fold: to offer some possible answers to questions concerning popular culture that teachers might have and to offer some suggestions on utilizing the wealth of material that is available.

The writers of this guide feel that many teachers would be able to work under the definition of popular culture offered by Ray B. Browne and David Madden: "all those elements of life which are generally, though not necessarily, disseminated through the mass media."[1] Another way of defining popular culture, as the writers of this guide view it, is all those elements within our society which appeal to and influence many people and are generally transmitted through the mass media.

For some, the idea of using popular culture materials in the classroom would be strictly taboo. Dwight MacDonald states that "mass culture [that is, popular culture] began as, and to some extent still is, a parasitic, a cancerous growth on high culture."[2]

To others, it is the only way to approach the area of writing with their students. It is not the attempt of the writers of this guide to sway one's opinion one way or the other. It is our contention that teachers can continue to hold to the very high ideals and values of traditional education in writing, while meeting the students at a place, popular culture, where they feel comfortable as well as knowledgeable.

Popular culture is something that has wide appeal for today's youth and adults. It, therefore, becomes a viable tool for the classroom teacher in the teaching of writing. Because of its widespread appeal, it is bound to elicit feelings and reactions in our students.

It becomes our challenge and responsibility to observe this phenomenon in more than a superficial manner with out students. teachers and students, together, must develop methods to observe critically and gain an understanding of the effects of the mass media on our society.

On the pages which follow, an attempt is made to view some of the major areas of popular culture, and suggestions are presented for their use in the teaching of writing.

Footnotes

[1]Ray B. Browne and David Madden, The Popular Culture Explosion, (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1972), p. 203.

[2]Dwight MacDonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture", Mass Media and Mass Man, ed. by Alan Casty, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc., 1968), pp. 12-13.

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Advertising

"All happiness, all significance, all values that human beings might strive for are translated by advertising into purchasable commodities."

S.I. Hayakawa "Who's Bringing Up Your Children"

Advertising is likely the most pervasive, complex, sophisticated and influential of the popular art forms. And it is unavoidable. We encounter advertising in our homes as well as outside: it appeals to us from magazines and newspapers, radio and television, billboards and signs, packaging and labels.

Ad writers are masters of language. Their livelihoods depend on combining words and visuals into successful sales of products, services, ideas and people. To achieve this, the ad people have to know their audience (often using motivational research) and persuade this audience. Each word is weighed painstakingly to preserve economy and produce the desired effect.

The purpose of analyzing ads is to help students become aware of their own flexibility as writers and to introduce subjects such as diction, tone, style, word choices and purposeful sentence construction. An ad cannot afford to be difficult to understand. With guidance from the teacher, students can learn how ads are put together and how they work to achieve the desired effect on a particular audience.

The following suggested activities are not meant to be lesson plans but rather ideas for using advertising to motivate students in a study of language and to develop composition skills. The activities are not separated for use at particular grade levels since most can be applied at several levels according to the teacher's goals and expectations.

1. Read and discuss several ads that make appeals to us as humans or citizens (CARE, United Way, Save the Children, safe driving, anti-pollution, etc.)

   Have the students write and/or draw an ad for some service or value they feel is important--ecology, peace, health, better living conditions, education, etc. Encourage the students to make the ad honest, helpful and significant.

   Using the same approach, prepare a convincing ad on one of the following or others from discussion:

   No one over 35 should hold public office
   Underground living
   Pills that replace food
   Uniforms in classrooms
   A computer driven automobile
   Save the mosquito campaign

2. Have each student collect ads from magazines, newspapers or brochures that he/she feels best fit the following categories:

   Most persuasive
   Most honest or informational
   Most entertaining
   Most misleading or deceptive in use of language
   World's worst
   Favorite ad

   Students can write a short paragraph telling why each ad was chosen, keeping in mind the emotional appeal, use of language, audience, etc. Groups of children can assemble each category into books to be shared with other classes or placed in the I.M.C.

3. Make individual or class portfolios illustrating the various types of emotional appeals used in ads. Categories might include these areas that motivate people to buy:

Good looks/love/sex appeal--"Arrow introduces the shirt women love to touch"
Self-Image--"I know Why I Smoke"
Youth--"Mild Ivory Liquid helps keep hands young looking"
Pleasure--"Tastes like good old-fashioned lemonade"
Family--"You loved it as a kid. You trust it as a mother"
Good health--"Bayer wants her back outside, too"
One of a crowd--"Join the Pepsi generation"
Snob appeal--"Go first class with Charlie"
Patriotisism--"Chevrolet: Building a better way to see the U.S.A."
Economy--"If economy makes you happy"

Students could use one of more of these appeals to write a convincing paragraph or essay plugging a favorite sport, hobby, book or pet. An ad for a new product using one of these appeals could also be designed and written.

4. Ad techniques are the methods used to deliver the message. Common techniques used in advertising are:

Personification--The product speaks for itself. (Pillsbury Dough Boy)
Demonstration--On TV you are shown what the product can do. (Bounty-the quick picker-upper)
Testimonials--Celebrities, customers or employees recommend the product or service. (Karl Malden endorses American Express travelers checks)
Names, Slogans and Jingles--The ad tries to make the name, slogan or lyrics a household word. "In the valley of the jolly, ho-ho-ho, Green Giant")
Straight Delivery--The ad simply tells why the product should be bought. ("Spray on Pam for no-stick cooking...")
Question--The ad asks the question that demands a response from the consumer. (Shouldn't you be a One a-Day girl too?")
Dramatization--A drama is used to capture the attention of the audience. (The runaway child is

found along the road and is informed his parents are anxiously awaiting him at Perkins)

Examine and discuss the effectiveness of these techniques Groups of students could plan and prepare an ad or commercial using one of the techniques.

5. Write an advertising campaign for a new product. The class could divide into groups to work up campaigns for a similar product (a new cereal, soft drink, detergent, etc.) Components of the campaign would include:

   a new name
   radio commerical
   TV commercial/skit presentation
   magazine ad

   When groups have completed their work, have them try to "sell" their new product to another class. Do a survey to discover which campaign was most effective and popular. See if students can figure out why.

6. Write class or individual letters to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Printing Office for information on health regulations, packaging and advertising restrictions for the sale of dry cereals; and to companies:

   to complain (sexism, misleading language, or claims, etc.)
   to praise (superior product, clever or entertaining ad)
   for information (% of ingredients, etc.)

7. Assign an hour of TV viewing when children will take notes on the products advertised. Notes could include:

   viewing time and program
   products advertised
   audience to which ad is directed (age, sex, farmer, housewife)
   emotional appeal (youth, one of the gang, sex appeal)
   technique used (testimonial, dramatization)

   Formulate a chart for the information gathered. Discuss results and draw generalizations about purposes, methods and misrepresentations as the students see them.

8. Try to invite an ad person from a local firm to talk to the class. Write interview questions.

9. Collect brochures for places to visit. Students might write to a Chamber of Commerce for some. Study the layouts and techniques used and then have students design their own brochures for:

   the classroom, LMC
   school
   city or state, historical or recreational site
   a fictitious land or planet

10. After studying want-ads, establish a "Bargain Board." Have students write want-ads for items they might wish to sell or trade. Stress complete information, economy of words, and interesting word choices. If response is great, the teacher might set aside a market time. The "Bargain Board" could include other classes.

11. Compare and contrast the ads found in two different publications. For example, how do the ads in Seventeen show a different audience from Good Housekeeping? How do the products and services advertised differ to suit the image of each magazine?
    Or compare a specific ad in magazines with different audiences. How would a D-Con ad in House and Garden be different from the ad placed in Audubon magazine?

12. Have students write a paragraph about an ad (TV, radio, printed) that includes answers to these questions.

    What product is being sold?
    What use does the product have to you or society?
    What else is being sold with the product? (status, beauty)
    What type of audience is the sales pitch geared to?
    How does the ad portray American life?

13. Ask students to write a critical analysis of three TV advertisements. The students might choose from the following categories:

    ads directed towards children
    ads that promise happiness
    ads that show a sexist view of women
    ads showing stereotypes
    ads from non-profit organizations
    ads with secret ingredients

14. Brand names are carefully chosen by ad agencies. The choice of name can make or lose millions in a campaign. Make lists of product names and categorize by:

    Person's name (Ford)
    Fictitious person's name (Betty Crocker)
    Descriptive words (Teflon-Kote)
    One syllable (Bold)
    Animal (Jaguar)
    Historical/mythological (John Hancock Insurance)

    Discuss the connotations and emotional appeal of the names in each category. Students can experiment with language and write product names using examples of each category. Some products students would be familiar with are:

jeans	soft drinks	bicycles
make-up	bath soap	hamburgers
magazines	snack crackers	automobiles
sneakers	cereal	roller skates

15. Try to secure some copies of a publication for advertisers such as Advertising Age. Have students think of these questions when reading: What do people in the advertising business write for each other? Was it what you expected? Write a summary of the findings from the magazine.

16. Study movie ads from the newspaper. Note the use of unfinished statements, questions, short phrases, sense provoking words, statements from critics, etc. Students might use these techniques to produce a poster for a favorite book or classic, a movie they've seen, or a play or production to be staged for other classes.

17. Observe TV commercials broadcast at different times of the day or week. Show how the subjects and styles of the commercials indicate the audiences for which they are intended.

18. Prepare a place on a bulletin board to pin up an ad each week. Choose ads which use a variety of techniques and emotional appeals. Give the students the responsibility of analyzing the ad in a short paragraph. Students can read paragraphs and discuss major points relating to the ad at the end of a week.

19. Test an advertising claim. Have groups of students set up experiments to mirror ones shown in TV commercials. Possibilities include:

    Which is butter?
    Which peanut butter tastes most like fresh peanuts?
    Which bathroom tissue is softest?

20. Obtain issues of Consumer Reports, Changing Times, or other publications which evaluate products and services. Read the evaluation of a particular product and then collect ads for that item to compare to the information. What can be concluded? Present the findings in a written report which includes the ads.

21. Claims deal with the product. The advertiser tries to convince the consumer that his brand has an advantage over other similar brands. In many ways this involves creating an impression of product superiority. The following claims are commonly used:

    The unfinished claim--"Scott makes it better for you."
    "You can be sure if it's Westinghouse."
    The scientific claim--"Certs contains a sparkling drop of Retsyn."
    "Colgate with MFP"
    The empty promise claim--"Helps clear up nasal passages"
    "Fights tooth decay"
    The "grass is green" claim--"Mobil: the detergent gasoline" (All gasolines have detergent properties)

    Have students find several ads employing such claims. What makes the claim meaningless to the consumer? How could the statements in the ads be rewritten to show a superior product?

22. Ask your students to pretend they are visitors from another planet. The only view of Earth's inhabitants they will see, will be through TV commercials. What would be their report on the values, concerns and lifestyle of the people on Earth?

23. Proctor & Gamble manufactures many similar products.

Oxydol	Zest	Crest	Spic & Span
Tide	Camay	Gleem	Top Job

Why does a company produce two products both claiming to be the best? How might "brand loyalty" be a factor? Audience? Compare the advertising for one of the pairs of products.

24. Have students keep a journal of advertising for one day to see how many selling messages you have been exposed to.

    TV commercials--Radio advertising--Newspaper ads--
    Magazine ads--Billboards--Signs--Labels (on pencils,
    toothpaste)

    Share your results in class. What was the highest number counted.

25. Have the students choose a product that they believe is of high quality. Discuss the reasons for the choices made. Assign the task of writing an ad that accurately describes the product, but at the same time one that will sell the product.

26. Collect menus from fast food, ethnic, family, gourmet and fancy restaurants. Study and discuss which consumer group each appeals to. How do pictures and descriptive words affect the choices we make? Are some dishes given special names? Compare the description of the same basic dish at more than one restaurant. Compile a menu for:

    a Halloween monster party
    school lunch program
    hungry athletes
    classroom delights
    unusual appetites
    space travelers

27. Questions for opinion writings and research:

    --How has advertising given us more choices?
    --What would happen if advertisign were abolished?
    --In some countries TV programs run uninterrupted. Commercials are shown collectively at the beginning. What do you think of this practice compared to ours? Would it affect the ads themselves?
    --Explain which of these products would benefit most from advertising: A superior product? A product equal to competitio
    A comparatively poor quality product?
    --Make a list of rules you feel should govern advertising.
    --Research the rise of a fast food chain (McDonald's) What values and decisions contributed to the success story?

--Comedians such as George Carlin have used commercials for comedy material. Why are TV commercials so funny?
--How does advertising capitalize on people's fears?
--Research the advertising history of a product. What were successes and failures in campaigns, changes of image?
--Compare advertising today with a past decade.

Newspapers

Considering that the newspaper has been influencing its readers for the last 1500 years, it can teach us how to write very effectively about what humans think, feel and do. Not only can the journalist guide us in the close and careful gathering of information, but also in how to shape it directly to reach the intended audience.

The activities in this section are taken from the Wisconsin Newspaper in Education series. With almost 2,000 activities which range from Grade Levels 1 - 12 and span all of the disciplines, the series can be obtained (without charge) from:

Wisconsin Newspaper in Education Committee
333 West State Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201

Attention: Stuart Kendall

PRIMARY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Experience stories: Select interesting picture, discuss with class, print their ideas on board; have children read story orally; print story on tag for reading.

Choosing titles for pictures: Remove captions; list suggested titles; let children choose most appropriate.

Organization: Cut simple comic strip into separate pictures; mix order; have children put into proper sequence; tell story in right order.

Critical thinking. Discuss similarities and differences between two pictures in simple cartoon.

Phonics & word recognition: Find initial sounds; children locate and circle each word beginning with A's, B's, etc.

Also find ending consonants, blends, vowel combinations, opposites, rhyming words. Use headlines for word attack exercises. Write simple dialogue for comic strips.

Find words of one, two, three, etc., syllables; root words in longer words, prefixes, suffixes, contractions.

Classifying words: Find words that tell where, when, what, who; words that name foods, animals, etc.

Values: Show pictures about kindness to animals, brave deeds, etc. Tell about pictures; write cooperative story on board.

Listen to teacher read human interest story. Children draw picture to illustrate it; dramatize story; act out comics.

Letter-Writing: Have child choose a favorite comic strip charatter. Write a funny letter to him. Read the letter to the class.

Community workers: Find pictures of different jobs; tell how each helps in the community.

Follow classified ads: Have students write one for something they would like to sell.

Make poems using headlines; paste on construction paper.

Financial Section allows "investments" to be planned on paper. Have students make graphs following action of stocks.

Classified Advertising lets readers reach mass market at low cost. Have students write sample ads.

HIGH SCHOOL: Direct students in the following writing activities:

Write letters of application based on jobs listed in classifieds.

Write a letter to an advice columnist. Trade papers and write answers. Read both questions and answers orally.

Write a theme discussing how the newspaper can help us to become more informed citizens.

Locate a news story in which the headline seems ineffective. Rewrite the article; staple the original article to your rewrite. Include both sides of the controversy in the topic sentence. Define the problem in the first paragraph. Present one side in the second paragraph. Present the opposite side in the third paragraph, beginning with some transitional phrase like "on the other hand." Write your conclusion in the fourth paragraph.

Using a current newspaper or the vertical file in your school library, prepare a travel essay based on material on an area of the world or a major city. Tell source of articles.

Read a newspaper article on a highly controversial issue. Choose other articles showing both sides of the question. Analyze these according to argument, approaches and use of propaganda devices. Take a stand. Challenge one of your classmates to debate the issue. Write about this whole experience in a concise paper of evaluation.

Find a well-developed paragraph in the newspaper. Analyze the structure as to the location of the topic sentence and the way in which supporting details are placed.

Pick a well-written article in the newspaper. Number each of its paragraphs. Go through one by one and write the essence of what you read by paraphrasing it. Check your results with another student's reaction.

Find a human interest picture in the paper and write the feature article to go with the picture.

Using newspaper, book, movie, and television reviews as models, write a review of a book, television show or a school play.

A news story gives the reader main facts quickly and trails off at the end in case of shortening. Choose a story; consider the effect of its headline, its lead paragraph, its summary, its punch, astonisher, quotation, suspended interest, picture, question, background, and details of the body. Write your own news story about what will happen in your community in 20/6.

Comics

No chess player finds any real pleasure in playing an obvious inferior opponent. Every game ever invented by mankind is a way of making things hard for the fun of it. The great fun, of course, is in making the hard look easy. Too much difficulty is painful. The Freshman football coach does not send his squad to play last year's Rose Bowl winner. Neither does he send it to play grammar school teams. He tries to find opponents who will give his players a real chance to extend themselves, win or lose, and he hopes bit by bit to develop them for harder play.

John Ciardi
How Does a Poem Mean?

As teachers, we need to take a long look at how we can help our students progress from kindergarten writing to high school writing. Obviously, if we give them an opponent, or writing assignment, that is too easy, they will, as the advanced chess player, be bored. If we expect them to be another Milton in their writing, we have accomplished no more than the battered freshman team after playing the Rose Bowl Champs. Instead, we need to find and use material that will be both encouraging and challenging to the student. Popular Culture--in this case, comics-- may be the answer. Since the student is already familiar with comics, a good deal of time does not have to be spent getting to know the material. The student and teacher are free to go immediately into a more in-depth study of characters, sequence, etc. The following pages deal with just a few avenues that may be traveled by using comics with students.

Often, students have problems writing thoughts or stories because they do not understand the need for sequence. By studying comics, students will see the need and usage of sequencing.

SEQUENCE

1. Begin by finding out students' favorite comics. Students and teacher bring in several different comic strips.
2. Introduce terms--frame, strip, author signature.
3. Opaque or Xerox comics with much change from frame to frame.
4. Discuss picture changes. Do they fit with word changes? Could the picture changes fit in a different order? Why or why not?
5. Have student pick a comic strip (or teacher assigns a certain comic strip) and write down all of the changes from one frame to the next. He or she then exchanges with a partner and they repeat the activity. Discuss what people found, and what they felt was most important. Why were those changes important?

SEQUENCE

1. Bring in several strips where the words have been blocked off.
2. Have students write down the action and changes from one frame to the next.
3. Carefully write a story for the pictures.
4. Have students share their stories with the rest of the class. Does each story compliment the pictures? Is the story in a logical order?
5. Share the real words from the strip with the students. Can both their words and the author's original words fit the comic? Why or why not?
6. Who is the audience? Does that change any of your ideas about the strip?

SEQUENCE

1. Most comic strips have the same ingredients as a short story. Both have a beginning, middle, and end. A comic strip starts out by introducing the characters. This may be accomplished by simply having the character appear and talk, since the audience already knows the character from previous strips. The next frames build a situation until they are concluded in the last frame. (A continuing strip may end on a note of suspense.) Discuss ingredients with students.

2. Have students draw a four frame comic, using the first frame as a beginning, the next two as the middle, and the last one as the end. When they are finished drawing, have them fill in the words. (They should have an idea of what will happen before drawing.) This may be done in groups.

3. Share students' comics. Do the stories fit the picture? Are the stories in a logical order?

4. Post comics on bulletin boards, send to school or local paper.

Heroes play a big part in our culture. Children spend time playing that they are a hero, or that their hero has come to rescue them. Who are the comic book heroes? Students can understand themselves and their heroes. Through writing, they will clarify their own thoughts and feelings about heroes, as well as invent their own.

USING SEQUENCE AND DETAIL

1. Make a class list of comic book heroes.

   Superman
   Spiderman
   Wonderwoman

2. What can each one of these heroes do? How many have supernatural powers? How do the supernatural powers help them to be heroes? Does someone have to have powers to be a hero?

3. Read several hero strips aloud. What are some of the qualities of a hero? (always on the side of good; honest; always willing to help; always succeeds; doesn't drink, smoke, lie) What are the students' requirements of a hero?

4. Give students a few strips and have them write down all of the good and bad qualities of the hero. Share discoveries in class.

5. Have students invent their own hero for a comic strip of their own. Pretend that an editor of a newspaper has asked them for

a new strip. Have students write down the qualities of their hero, what the hero looks like, where the hero is from, whom he will serve, etc.

6. Have students look at a strip to see how many hero qualities are used effectively in one strip. Have students use some of their qualities and make a strip. This may be a group project until they are all done.

7. Make a booklet of all comics.

Other Activities.

-- Have students pretend they are the hero on a bad day.
-- Write to their comic hero.
-- Pretend they are the bad guy.
-- Two students write a strip, one being the hero, another the bad guy.
-- Write about someone who is their hero, telling why. (a person)

One kind of person that will always pop up in everyday life as well as literature is the scapegoat. Comics offer many different kinds of scapegoats. Students can learn to persuade someone why the scapegoat should not be blamed. They may also be able to see times that they were a scapegoat or used someone else as one.

SCAPEGOAT

1. Discuss what a scapegoat is. Bring in comics with an obvious scapegoat. Have students bring in comics. Make a list of scapegoats in comic. (Charlie Brown, Dagwood, Beetle Bailey)

2. What kinds of characters surround the scapegoat? (Are the other characters brutal?)

3. List the characters in the Peanuts comic strip, write down their character, their shortcomings and strengths. Could they get along without Charlie Brown?

   Charlie Brown--insecure, honest, keeps trying. We identify with him--we see a little of ourselves in Charlie. If he gave up, a part of us would die. We

like to see the lonely Charlie Brown call up the operator and ask her to tell us a story.

Lucy--bossy, secure, understands psychology, unsuccessfully pursues Schroeder.

Schroeder--dedicates his life to one thing--piano.

Linus--insecure, but compensates and handles life by using a security blanket--believes in childhood fantasies--great pumpkin.

Sally--young, believes in Linus and Santa Claus.

The characters in this strip are not mischief makers, have no adults to counter, so Charlie Brown ends up as the scapegoat. We see everyday failures and truths through this strip. Ask students to find a strip that expresses a feeling they have had before. Discuss the strip.

4. Have students use that strip and persuade the character who is using Charlie that it is not Charlie's fault.

   When the student is done, have him get a partner. The partner should pretend that they are the character countering Charlie in the strip. If they cannot understand the argument, they should tell the author why. If the argument is confusing, the partner should help them find why. The partner will decide if he is convinced. The teacher could also read the comic strip and then read the argument and glean class comments. Students should correct their papers and hand in. Post comics and papers on bulletin board.

5. Students could write about a time that they were a scapegoat or saw someone else be.

6. Write to one of the strip writers who make much use of a scapegoat and ask him why he does.

LANGUAGE OF COMICS

1. Pick out some comics that have words with easy synonyms. Pay special attention to the diction. Rewrite some of the comics in class using similar words. Depending on age group, this may be a good time to talk about the thesaurus.

2. Have students rewrite a comic strip. Read in class and see if the rewritten strip has changed in meaning. Discuss why this may happen.

3. Look at comics like Batman, that have many expressions such as "pow," "zowie" and "slam." How are these used and why. Do they work? Have students decide why these expressions are used and how they could substitute words. What else might be needed? (Description)

4. Although comics offer pictures, they still cannot totally neglect description. Discuss how some comics use the "pow" and other words as their description. Use one of these comic strips and change the "pow" into a little more description. Bring in examples of descriptive writing and go over it before assignment. This may be group or individual work.

Comics are written for a specific audience. Often times stereotypes are used because the audience for which the strip is written recognizes and maybe even identifies with the stereotype.

1. Name some comic strips with a stereotyped character. (Blondie, Dagwood, The Better Half, Dennis the Menace)

2. Discuss how these characters are stereotyped. (Students should discuss what they think stereotype means.)

   Dennis--the typical "spiders and snails and puppy dog tails" while Margaret is "sugar and spice and everything nice".

3. How are people set in a role today? How have we reflected roles in the past? Present? What about commercials? (If a woman is in a commercial, she is portrayed in business and not married; cowboys are macho, doctors are kind and overly concerned--like Marcus Welby)

4. Follow Tarzan through his changes. Begin with his early comics and write down his changes as a class in the same way as the class wrote down frame changes earlier. Why has Tarzan changed? Do you think the Women's movement would have allowed Jane and Tarzan's relationship as it was? Why or why not? What are the roles of the characters in this strip? Are the roles still the same?

5. Have the students write why they think the roles of characters change. They may also include some of the changes.

6. Hand the students an old comic. Ask them to try to change the language or pictures to get rid of stereotypes. Share with the class, display on bulletin board.

7. Watch the newspaper for any comics printed that have a label or stereotype on a character. Write to the editor. Ask the editor to come and talk about changes he has noticed. How do they pick what comics go into their paper?

8. Find out if your community or surrounding community has an artist or cartoonist. Ask him to come in and talk to the students. Students write questions, invitation and thank-you letter.

9. Cartoonists use facial expressions that are considered a stereotype as well as role stereotypes. Consider and discuss the following:

   -- Boredom---eyes sleepy or closed--yawning with hand in front of mouth
   -- Embarassment---big silly smile with teeth showing
   -- Evil---mouth turned up as if in a smile, eyebrows turned inward and down
   -- Goodness---halo over head
   -- Happiness---mouth turned up, eyes may be closed--to turn happiness into a laugh, throw head back with mouth open.
   -- Inspiration---lightbulb over head
   -- Puzzlement---character scratches head and looks a bit worried
   -- Surprise---eyebrows raised, mouth open[1]

10. Look at old comics and then look at new ones. How have they changed? (Wonderwoman as well as Superman; family comics discuss different issues.) Write about the change. (Many books give the history of comics as well as some of the early strips. A few books are included in the bibliography.)

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[1]Ray Paul Nelson, Cartooning, Henry Regnery Co., Ill, 1975. pp. pp. 222-225.

SYMBOLS OF AMERICA

1. What is a symbol? What are some symbols in comic strips? (The donkey and elephant, dollar sign, Mickey Mouse)

2. Where would you find the donkey and elephant symbol? How are they different from Mickey Mouse? What audiences are the different symbols directed at?

3. Discuss how symbols start. How did Mickey Mouse start? What does Mickey Mouse mean to each student? When did they first hear of Mickey Mouse? Where do they see pictures and news about him? (ads, products) Discuss the same about others.

4. Have students write down symbols that they see. Also have them record every time they see Mickey Mouse on a product. Compile and discuss information.

5. Read old comics about Mickey Mouse. Do they fit the product?

6. Students can write Mickey's reaction to having his name used on products. Pretend they are writing to the maker of the product.

7. Have the students invent a product of their own that they think Mickey would enjoy.

8. Look at political cartoons in the local newspaper. Name several symbols here. Discuss the difference.

9. Pretend that each student is running for a school office. The student is to come up with a campaign cartoon using symbols discussed. He should also make a campaign cartoon using Mickey Mouse. When finished, post both cartoons side by side. Students should vote on each set, picking the cartoon that would catch their attention and draw their vote. Tally the votes, and see if politics or Mickey wins. Discuss why the winner won. (Audience will probably play a big role.)

COMIC SOAP OPERAS

1. How did the soap opera get its name?

2. What are the qualities of a soap opera? Who are they intended for?

3. Describe the characters in a soap opera. Do you know them better than in other comics?

4. Discuss a soap opera that the students may watch on TV. Are there any likenesses? Differences?

5. Have students look at a soap opera comic that leaves the reader in some type of suspense. Pretend that the strip may have one more week before it's done. Solve the mystery.

ADDRESSES

1. Bell Syndicate, 247 West 43 Street, New York, NY

2. Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate, 220 East 42 Street New York, NY

3. King Features Syndicate, 235 East 45 Street, New York, NY

4. NEA Service, Inc., 1200 West Third Street, Cleveland, Ohio

5. Publishers Syndicate, 30 North LaSalle Street, Chicago, Illinois

6. Register and Tribune Syndicate, Des Moines, Iowa

Look at each comic strip. Somewhere the syndicate is identified. Write to the syndicate for specific addresses or information. It's always a good idea to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

OTHER IDEAS

1. Have students make puppets from comic characters. Write a script in groups. Have the students make props and put on a puppet play with their comic characters.

2. Make a comic strip movie. Using two paper towel tubes and paper, have the students write a script and draw it on some paper. Wind the paper around the tubes and have students show their production. Words may be written on the "movie," or spoken as the show rolls! (Other ways of movie productions suggested by Make Your Own Animated Movies--book in bibliography.)

3. Have students put together a book of comics that they have made.

4. Have the class make up a comic that fits an occupation. Present it to the people in that occupation and see if they'll put it up in their waiting or work room.

5. Have students share their comics with younger classes.

6. Donate a book of the class' comics to the library.

7. If the school uses printed daily announcements, print an announcement with a student comic on top.

8. Take a giant picture of a character and have a student fill in pictures of things they think that character is made up of. (e.g., Charlie Brown--baseball bat.) Put the finished product up on the board and have the students write why they put what they did in their character. Post the papers. Have students try to guess what paper goes with what character.

Film

Today's student has seen almost every kind of film imaginable from Walt Disney to Star Wars. What is so special about film? Nothing, if you want to exclude the fact that it provides them with a vicarious experience and totally captures their attention.

The role we, as teachers, have to assume is one of guidance. We have to guide the student into developing the good habits of perception, analysis, judgment, and selectivity to process the visual stimuli they receive.

This makes film a very useable tool for the teaching of writing. Film becomes the catalyst and writing the vehicle for the presentation of the student's ideas, feelings, and perceptions about what they have witnessed.

The following are some multi-disciplinary suggestions for the utilization of film in the writing process. These suggestions do not follow any particular hierarchy of skills.

ACTIVITIES

1. Students can compare a novel to its film version.
   Prewriting
   Have the students read the novel. Discuss the novel with the students. Analyze its structure. How is the story told? Is a narrator used? Does the language used affect the reader's response? Does the method of telling affect the time sequence? Is there a hero? View the film and use the same questions. This will lead to some very obvious differences between the two media. It may also lead to the discovery that the author's intent has been shifted.
   Writing
   Students could take a chapter from a novel they are reading and rewrite it as though it were going to be used in a film.

2. Students can view a film which has little or no dialog and then write a narration or dialog for the film.
   Prewriting
   Ask the students to tell you everything they can about pigs. Encourage one word, descriptive responses. Place these on the board and classify them. Show the movie Pigs from Churchill Films.
   Writing
   Children can use any of the following methods to write about what they have seen: dialog for the pigs, use speeches of a narrator to describe the images, a narrative to describe your reactions to the film, and so on. The dialog or narrative speeches could be taped and played while the film is reshown.

3. Students can make their own filmstrips from new or used 35mm film to convey an idea from math, social studies, or science. From this, they can develop a style for writing scripts and acquire a sense for compactness in their writing.
   To prepare the film follow these simple steps:

   -- Soak the film in water for at least 10 minutes.
   -- Scrape the film with a blunt knife or scrub brush.
   -- Use felt markers or nib pens with India ink or acetate ink to place the images on the film.

4. Plays are always written using a script format. While teaching this format, students usually want to write their own scripts. One method which might really excite your students after writing their scripts would be for them to make a film of it.

The materials you will need are:

-- A super 8 or 8mm camera.
-- Film for the camera of your choice.
-- Cassette tapes and recorder.
-- Splicing machine.

The students must:

-- Write their own script.
-- Design or find appropriate settings to fit the script.
-- Cooperate to accomplish the goal of a completed film.

This project can be expensive, so it might be wise to approach the parent organization in your building to underwrite the project.

5. If you are teaching students the format of reviews or critiques, use the newspaper as a model and then have them write their own reviews of a film they have recently seen. These could be placed in the school or class newspaper or shared with classmates by placing them on the bulletin board in the room.

6. If you are studying advertising and its techniques, your students could design an ad campaign for a real or fictiticus movie.

7. Students can report about how the film maker develops a character in a movie.

8. To teach sequencing, stop a film somewhere where the action seems to be building to a climax and ask the students to complete the action in writing as they feel it will happen based on what they have already viewed.

   Another thing they could do is to write a sequel to a film they have viewed.

9. Students can write fan letters to their favorite actors and/or actresses asking for information as to how they received their training, the difficulties they encounter while shooting a picture, etc.

10. The series Bread and Butterflies can be used to have the students write about how they would react to certain situations or to solutions that the series offers.

Television

There is no question of television's popularity. Ninety-six per cent of all Americans have television in their homes.[1] From the ages 3 through 16, a child spends more total time on television than on school.[2] Children in first and second grades spend 15 - 16 hours weekly watching television, while the average for elementary school pupils is 21 hours. Viewing increases with 5th and 6th graders to 25 hours per week, and then decreases through junior high and high school to 12 - 14 hours.[3] There is no doubt, children watch TV.

Since television is viewed by children with such great frequency, it stands as an important resource for the classroom teacher. More specifically, television would seem to be an ideal vehicle through which one could teach writing. One of the problems in the teaching of writing is motivation. The students don't know what to write about, where to begin, or worse yet, "hate writing." It lies within the classroom teacher to erase these fears and prejudices and turn writing into a positive and personal experience. We suggest here that television can be used to do this and more.

Besides gripping the students' attention and therefore reducing motivational problems, TV reflects what is important in our culture and should be studied. If shows like "Mork and Mindy," "Happy Days," and "LaVerne and Shirley" are consistently at the top of the ratings, perhaps entertainment and frivolity is something that is important to

people. If "All in the Family," has managed to remain on the air for 11 years, an incredible feat in a constantly changing medium, perhaps bigotry, stereotyping and social issues are important things to be dealt with. If shows like "Starsky and Hutch," and Saturday morning cartoons display violence with no serious consequences, then students should begin to reflect on this and its influence on society.

To many people, teachers included, television has an unexalted reputation. Some feel that since TV literature is for the masses, and is not of a classical nature, it is not worth studying. We disagree vehemently. Anything that appeals to the masses should be studied because, if for no other reason, it involves so many people.

One more argument teachers might have concerning the use of television in the teaching of writing is the lack of materials available for this. Our suggestion is that all you need is a television set and a creative imagination. There is no limit to the ideas a teacher can use to successfully combine a popular media with an ancient art.

We have listed some ways television can be used to teach writing. It is important when trying these activities that the lessons be structured with exact goals decided upon by the teacher. Unstructured use of television will only result in chaos and confusion. In order for learning to occur, students must be informed of purpose and procedure.

Since most of writing should be preceded by pre-writing activities, it is important to preface TV watching with discussions, sharing of experiences, explanations, instructions and introductions. Please

don't have your students go watch a TV program and write about it. This will lead to many of the same kinds of frustrations and problems students run into when told the first day of school to write about their summer vacation.

Finally, we think it is vital, once students start writing, to permit them, at least at the beginning, to get their feelings and thoughts down on paper without fear of teacher corrections. Papers can be marked later for spelling, grammar and punctuation, but students should be promised that their first copies will not be violated by red marks. One of the best suggestions we've heard for this is to give the students different colored paper for each draft. Yellow paper, for example, would be their first copy, used to get thoughts, feelings and reactions down. Students would be told not to pay attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, and papers would not be marked for this. Their second copy might be on pink paper, and the student would pay more attention to organization of thoughts and mechanics. (This is the paper that could be corrected for spelling, grammar and punctuation.) Finally, the student would make a good white copy with all corrections made and thoughts rewritten and finalized.

ACTIVITIES [4]

Notetaking -- an important skill that could be practiced by students taking notes on a television program. The students could take notes on what happened in the story, the main events. (plot)

Role of the family

1. Brainstorm with students on all the television shows they watch that deal with the family. ("Waltons," "Eight is Enough," "All in the Family," etc.)

2. Discuss what a family is, and the variations of a family you see on TV ("M.A.S.H." - the extended family, "One Day At A Time" - divorced, single parent family, etc.)

3. Give students 3 to 4 days to watch one of these family shows and report back what they observed. Have students sign up for which shows they are going to watch and then give them a list of things to watch for.

   -- What did you see for a family relationship?
   -- What kind of struggles or problems did the family have?
   -- How do they support or help each other?
   -- How is the family to be important?
   -- What is the father like? (Job? Smoke or drink? Is he authoritarian?)
   -- What is the mother like? (Job? Smoke or drink? Is she authoritarian? Does she run the family?)
   -- Kids (Interests? Do they go to school?)
   -- What is the economic status of the family?
   -- What is their religion?
   -- What is the educational background of the parents?
   -- What does the family value?

   After the students have collected the above information and shared it with the teacher in a large group, or with their peers in small groups, they might want to deal with the following questions:

   -- Do family shows tend to be unreal?
   -- Is the family you watched on TV anything like your family? How is it different?

4. Students, in small groups, create their own family. It can be patterned after their own or what they've observed on TV (or a combination of both). Students should write down name of their family, list who is in their family by name, age and

occupation. Students can make these things up!) Students should then write a TV script for "One Day in the Life of the _____" (fill in the family name). Emphasize to the students that they should be serious and be realistic. Students then can act the skit out. As they act out their family skit, the rest of the class can observe and discuss what the family is like and what it values.

5. Students can write a letter to a member of their own family or their entire family.

6. Students can write letters to the director or producer of the TV family shows:

   -- What is the idea concerning the family that you are trying to get across in your show?
   -- What is your family like?

7. Students can write to the stars of the family shows and ask them about their own families. (See p. 14 for list of studio addresses.)

8. Interview parents as to what family shows were like they watched. (E.g., "I Love Lucy," "Make Room For Daddy," etc.)

News Programs

1. Ask students what news programs they watch. List them on the board. ("60 Minutes," "Channel 3 News," etc.)

2. Focus in on one news programs -- "60 Minutes"

   -- What is the format?
   -- Watch the whole show but take notes on one of the segments.

3. Have students write their own "60 Minutes" show in small groups. Each student takes a part. One does the ads, one does the interview, one introduces the show, etc. Videotape and/or show to another class.

4. Human interest stories in the news -- interviewing people that are important. Make a list of important people in the community. Tell students who they are and basically why they are important. Have students sign up for one of those people, go out and interview that person and write the results You might want to brainstorm with the students and their parents a list like the following:

-- Joel Skor[illegible]ka -- Mayor
-- Lee Dreyfus -- Governor
-- Betty Smith -- politician
-- Edwin Young - president of University

Make booklet of "Who's Who" in Madison.

5. Interview people in your school (teachers, principals, custodians, etc. Make booklet of Who's Who at _____ School. Tell students these booklets will be presented to the principal for Parent's Night or to the PTA. (Name, what they do in school, personal info.)

6. Look at format of the local news program. (Always same: local, national, weather and sports.) Create and write your own news program in small groups. Choose who will do what. Consider how you want to dress, who's your audience, what sort of language should you use, etc.

7. Tell who your favorite newscaster is (on local news) and why. (Try to have students avoid the responses of "he's cute," and "she's pretty.") What does he/she say? How does he/she use language?

8. Write letter to that newscaster telling why you liked him/her. Back up reasons why you like that particular newscaster. If everyone likes the same newscaster invite him/her to talk to your class.

9. Compare the way news is covered in magazines vs. TV vs. newspapers. Take one big news event, observe and record how it is covered in each of those media. Choose a news story (real or created) and write it up for a magazine, TV, and newspaper.

Johnny Carson

1. Have students watch Johnny's monologue, taking notes on the subject matter covered in the monologue. (Most topics are about popular culture or current events. He also talks about things that have mass appeal.)

2. Write to Johnny Carson's scriptwriters. Ask them how they write the monologue, where they get their ideas, etc.

3. Talk about what goes into a monologue and then have students (in small groups) write their own.

4. The interview - Put students in small groups. Have one person be Johnny Carson and the others be his guests. Other students

can choose their favorite TV, movie, etc. star. Have students write an interview and then perform it.

5. Put on the Johnny Carson show from monologue to end.

TV Commercials

Have students watch commercials in the afternoon if possible.

1. Have students watch TV ads, playing close attention to the way women are portrayed. Have them answer the following questions:

   -- List the jobs you see women doing in the commercials you watched. (E.g., housewife, plumber, etc.)
   -- What is the age of the woman?
   -- How is the woman dressed?
   -- How does she act?
   -- Does a man appear in the commercial? How does he treat the woman? What is his relationship to the woman?

2. Have students come back and discuss in small groups what they discovered. They are to have a reporter report back to the large group on their discoveries.

3. Have students choose one commercial they've seen that involves a woman and act it out. Analyze for stereotyping and sexism.

4. Students create (write) their own ad with women trying to sell a product. Be sure commercials don't stereotype women. Try reversing the roles in a commercial. Have a strong female character who rescues a weaker male from dirty laundry.

5. List types of commercials seen in 2 hour time. (2 soap, 3 breakfast cereal, etc.) Based on what commercials are selling, have students write down what they think is important in our society.

6. Have students list commercials they like and why. Have students list commercials they don't like and why. Have the students write a letter to the company sponsoring the product and explain what they like or don't like about their TV commercial and product. (A complete listing of names and addresses of television sponsors may be obtained from The Television Sponsors Product Cross-Reference Directory, published quarterly by Everglades Publishing Co., Everglades, Florida, 33929.)

7. Have the students study propaganda, (5 types: Bandwagon, Emotional Words, Testimonial, Transfer, and Repetition). Watch commercials, observe and record what propaganda devices are used.

8. Select a certain product, e.g., laundry detergent. The students go home and interview parents as to why they purchased this particular brand. Have the students write down the information they gathered and report back to the class. Pay attention to:

   size of container
   taste
   smell
   packaging
   relative quantity
   health value
   name
   brand name.[5]

   Did your parents buy it because of some of the selling points stressed in commercials?

9. Compile a list of some of the well known television slogans "Melts in your mouth, not in your hand." Make into quiz (or quiz show) to see if you can identify the product.[6] After small group compiles list, exchange with another group or give as quiz show to whole class. See how many can guess.

10. Interview local merchants to see if TV advertising affects their stocking of various merchandising.

11. Examine claims in TV advertising. Exactly what do they claim? Do you think this is reasonable? Bring in person connected with TV advertising and have your class ask him/her questions.

Character

1. Pick out a character on TV that is most like you. List these TV characters on the board. (The students can just pick a character they like.)

2. Watch the show and take notes on what the character is like. (Way he/she dresses, talks, acts, moves, etc.)

3. Involve that character in a story.

4. List adjectives that describe your TV character.

5. List verbs that describe your character's actions.

6. Write complete sentences about your character.

_____(adj.) Fonzie walks.

Fonzie _____(verb).

Fonzie struts _____(adverb)

Vocabulary

1. Have the students list new words they hear from watching TV. After they have written the word down, have them define it. Do this for a week. The students exchange lists, study and take tests on each others' lists.

2. The students can make a dictionary of new vocabulary words.

Cartoons

1. Examine Saturday morning cartoons for violent acts. Have the students list the violent things that occur. After listing the violent act, have the students write down what happens next.

2. Discuss violence on TV. Ask the students if they think this violence has any effect on them.

The following 8 exercises were taken from New Season: The Positive Use of Commercial Television with Children by Rosemary Lee Potter, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1976. We have only excerpted several, there are many excellent exercises left that you might like to try!

Alpha Order

Experience: Placement of words in alphabetical order.

Have the students name their favorite TV programs. List on board. Have the students put them in alphabetical order by first word. (Exclude little words like the, and, an.)

Word Analysis

Examples among an array of TV titles and characters.

compound words	plurals
Manhunter	Valley of the Dinosaurs
Flintstones	Superfriends
Ironside	Goodtimes
Superfriends	

contractions	little words in big words
Let's Make a Deal	Born Free
	Little House on the Prairie
	Mannix
	The Waltons

Have the students look for above examples.

Lingo

1. The students get together in small groups and make a list of slang words they use (and lingo), and write a definition for each word. After each group has compiled a list, they can alphabetize the words and make a slang dictionary.

2. Have the students listen to TV for lingo statements. See if they can write definitions for the following:

"Before we sign-off ..."
"Portions of the preceeding were prerecorded."
"Sitting in for _____ will be _____."
"_____, _____, _____ will be with us."
"This program was filmed on location in _____."
"Portions of this program you may feel are too intense for preadolescent children or other persons who are watching."
"Portions of this program were filmed before a live audience."
"She'll do fine in that time-slot. Look who she's opposite."
"We'll be right back."
"This program has been pre-empted by the following special. _____(name of program), normally seen at this time, will return at its regularly scheduled time next week."

"We rejoin the network for the program already in progress."
"We interrupt this broadcast for the following special report."
"We regret that our video transmission is temporarily disrupted."
"The trouble is not with your receiver. We are experiencing video difficulty."
"The story that you have seen was true. Only the names were changed to protect the innocent."
"Any resemblance between these characters and any persons living or dead is purely coincidental."
"This editorial does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the station or the program's sponsor."

3. Have the students watch TV and see if they can come up with any more TV lingo.

Listen-Remember

Remembering details and sequence:

1. Invite one student to tell class exact details of a program watched by many students the day before. You want the most accurate retelling of details and sequence of events.

2. Have the students watch one TV program and list the main details of what happened. Have them write out these details in the order that they occur on the program. Have them scramble the order (this can be done in small group) and then another group must put their list in the correct order.

Picture Tell

Get a picture of a TV star and have the students tell you everything they can about the picture. (Put the picture on a colorful backing.) Have students get a picture of their favorite TV star, put on colorful paper, and write about that star.

Poem Play

TV motivated poems:

couplet: If there is trouble, the police chief sends
a message to the "Superfriends."

cinquain: John-Boy
Oldest son
Writes of family
Sensitive, loving, loyal smile
Walton

limerick: There once was a stallion named Ed
Who talked as each day he was fed.
No one could believe it
That he could achieve it
"That's why it's a secret," Ed said.

triplet: We know about that horse.
It cannot talk of course.
We heard if from that source.

Haiku, sonnets, acrostics can also be used.

Have students make up their own poems, related to TV of course!

Riddling

Write riddle and students guess which program:

Handsome and pretty
Bagpipes and Golden Gate
Sassy Homemaker
Crime fighters
Family love.
What show? ("Macmillan and Wife")

Spin Off Programs

1. Discuss which programs are spin offs. (e.g., "Lou Grant" from "Mary Tyler Moore.")

2. Write an imaginary spin off for one of the current television programs.

Spin off for "Happy Days" -- "Joani Grows Up"
Spin off for "Mork and Mindy" -- "Mindy's Grandmother Goes to College"

Menu

Design a menu for a specific TV show

1. Have students get together in small groups. Have them pick a TV show. Tell them they are going to design a menu for that specific TV program. Have them first make a list of terms they would hear or are used on that TV program. (e.g., "White Shadow"--gym, basketball, Carver High, jock, game, etc.)

2. Have students then create their menus.

   "White Shadow"

   Jockburger
   Fast break fries
   Carver cokes
   Dunk it doughnuts
   Jabaarburger -- King size burger
   Free throw floats
   Cheerleader shakes

Telephone dialogue

Write a telephone dialogue between 2 TV show characters.

Picture

Take a picture of favorite star, combine with another product. Students can get this product from ads in magazines. Have them paste the picture of the TV star and product at the top of a paper and create a story around it. (e.g., The Incredible Hulk and Borax)-- the story proceeds to tell how Borax got the green out!)

Obituary

Have students choose a TV star and write his/her obituary.

Dialogue

1. Have students choose 2 TV stars that don't quite go together. (e.g., LaVerne and Lou Grant, The Hulk and the White Shadow, Mork and Archie, etc.)

2. Have them write a dialogue between the two.

3. Have the students act out their dialogues.

Visit a TV Studio

Visit a TV studio and make a booklet on how a TV show is made.

Places to write to show your interests, concerns and for information:

ABC
1330 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10019

CBS
51 West 52nd St.
New York, New York 10019

NBC
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10020

PBS
485 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Action for Children's Television (ACT)
46 Austin Street
Newtonville, MA 02160
(They stand for quality programming for children without commercialism)

The Council on Children's Media and Merchandising
1346 Connecticut Ave. N.W.
Washington D.C. 20036
(This is an organization supporting local and national broadcast reform groups.)

The Television Information Office
745 5th Ave.
New York, New York 1[illegible]2
("A two way bridge of [illegible]tanding between the TV industry and its many public [illegible]

Conclusions:

1. At the very beginning you might want to take a survey of the students' television viewing habits and what shows they watch.
2. Using television to teach writing takes time. It involves a series of carefully planned steps.
3. Don't be afraid to use TV and pop culture to teach writing. It's high interest.
4. If students can't watch TV for various reasons ("I don't have a TV," "My parents' favorite program is on at the same time," "My brother always gets his way," etc), you have several options:

   -- give assignments over 2 to 3 day period
   -- videotape show.
   -- a group of kids meet at one house
   -- alternative assignment, read short story, etc.

5. At the beginning write the parent(s) a letter telling them you are starting a TV unit, and will need their cooperation in using the TV set.
6. Whenever possible tell students who their audience is and vary it as much as possible.

   Possible audiences:

   Teacher
   Peers
   Another class
   Family
   Newscasters
   Companies that make products
   Your school
   Networks
   TV stars
   TV writers, directors, producers
   Commercial writers
   "Stars" in the community
   PTA

7. Remember there is no set formula for using TV to teach writing.

Good luck!

Footnotes:

[1]Schrank, Jeffrey, The T.V. Action Book (Evanston, Illinois: McDougal, Littell and Co., 1974) p.65.

[2]Christensen, Erna, "Television: Tiger by the Tail" (Washington D.C. Association for Childhood Education International, 1967) p. 3-6.

[3]Witty, Paul A., "Some Research on T.V." (Washington D.C. Association for Childhood Education International, 1967) p. 15-21.

[4]A special thanks to Marjorie Smelstor who brainstormed many of these activities with me and whose aid was invaluable.

[5]Hopkins, Lee Bennett., "Teaching Children to Analyze Television Advertising," Children and T.V. (1967) p. 41-43.

[6]Hopkins, p. 41-43.

Pop Music and Radio

Radio Plays

1. Have students listen to an old radio play.

2. Have students do a radio play from a Reading text. Emphasize what makes a radio play different from a regular play. (Invisible Man from the book To Turn A Stone (Ginn) is an excellent radio play)

3. Have studentr write their own radio play and act it out. Emphasize descriptive language. Be sure students write in sound effects.

Disc Jockey

1. Have students write a monologue for a disc jockey. They must write an introduction for the records of their choice, ads, time, weather, news, etc. (Students can do this in small groups)

2. Have students perform their monologue. (Other students can do news, weather, etc.)

Interview

1. Have students be a radio personality and interview a famous person. They need to write out the interview and then they can perform it.

2. Have students invite their favorite radio personality to their classroom. Have the students interview the radio personality.

Sports

1. Have students choose a sport.

2. Write a play by play (Eddie Doucette) for that sport.

3. Have students do their "play by play" for the class.

Lyrics -- Poetry

1. Have students choose their favorite song.

2. Have them write down the lyrics to their favorite song.

3. Have them write down the message of their song.

4. Pick a theme (the teacher does this.) (e.g., old age)

5. Collect some songs that deal with this theme. (e.g., "Old Friends" by Simon and Garfunkel) Have students read the lyrics and discuss. (Have lyrics typed out for students to look at.)

6. Have students write their own lyrics (poetry) around that same theme.

7. Combine song titles to make a complete sentence. (Good for using conjunctions!) "Freak out because he doesn't send me flowers any more."

8. Give them an object and have them develop a song title around it. (e.g., Campbell's soup can --"Can I Love You? Yes I Can")

Pop or Rock Groups

1. Brainstorm with students their favorite rock groups.

2. Have students make a list of popular rock groups or rock stars.

3. Have students write a letter to their favorite rock star. (Get address from album jacket.)

4. Have students write an autobiography of their favorite rock group or star.

5. Have students bring in album covers. Discuss style, attractiveness, attention getters, etc.

6. Have students design their own album cover.

7. Have students conduct a survey of the most popular rock groups or single rock star. Publish in school paper.

Radio Stations

1. Have students list all radio stations in their city.

2. Have each student sign up for a radio station and go home and listen to it.

3. Have students decide the audience for their radio station.

4. Make a booklet of radio stations in _____ and list their audience. (You might want to post this somewhere where other students can see it.)

Comparison and Contrast

1. Have students interview their parents about rock groups and songs during their time. Have students record the information gathered.

2. Have students compare their parents' music to present day music.

3. Compare song titles from parents' time with song titles now.

4. Look at song titles from the past. Analyze how they reflect that society's values. Look at song titles of today. How do they reflect today's values?

5. Interview parents about what they think of today's music. Listen to some old time music. What do you think of your parent's music?

Country Music

1. List song titles of popular country music.

2. Bring in a favorite country music song.

3. Analyze the way women are portrayed in the lyrics.

News

1. Listen to news on radio. Compare to news on TV. Compare words. Are they more visual on the radio? What about economy of language?

2. Give students a news article and have them make it into a radio broadcast.

3. Bring in a news editor. Have him/her talk about economy of language.

Popular Literature

Perhaps the most logical reasons for using popular literature in the teaching of writing are because it is popular; it's readily accessible and widely read.

The theoretical rationale for using popular literature is that much of it is formulaic. This greatly aides the reader and the writer in that it reduces the variables to a manageable number. The reader and the writer are also able to anticipate basic relationships within the work once they are familiar with the formula.[1]

Cawelti states that formulaic writing consists basically of two elements: convention and invention. He defines convention as those elements which are known before hand to both the writer and the audience. These things are favorite plots stereotyped characters, accepted ideas, and so on. Invention is defined as elements which are uniquely imagined by the writer, such as new characters, ideas, or linguistic forms.[2]

Cawelti suggests that formulas work because they are closely connected to a particular culture and time frame. They, therefore, have a much more limited selection for plot, character and setting. He also suggests that some artistic works also take over the functions of several cultural aspects of a society. Formulaic literature serves society by providing it with a form of entertainment and an acceptable avenue of temporary escape from the restrictions and limitations of life. Lastly, it provides individuals with a vehicle to act out uncon-

scious or repressed needs which they cannot openly act out in society.[3]

This introduction to the use of popular literature has focused on just one form; namely, that of the formulaic novel. Other areas which can be considered popular literature are magazines, diet books, and other non-fiction best sellers.

The following are some suggestions as to how to use popular literature in the classroom to teach writing. It is important to remember that, even if not stated, the prewriting exercises are of great importance to the writing process, and they should be used to the fullest possible extent. Also, the suggestions which are presented here do not follow a progression of skills; nor are they all-inclusive.

ACTIVITIES

1. To teach character description to students, try the following exercises.

   Prewriting

   Show a picture of a person to the students and ask them to describe what they see. Write the answers on the board. Ask them how a writer might describe the same person in a book. Look for descriptive words.

   Questions you might ask to arrive at the description are: How do you think the person feels?; How do you know he feels that way?; Could you tell how he feels by looking at his eyes; his mouth; his hands; etc? What is he doing with his eyes, etc., that tell you how he feels?

   Writing

   Write a descriptive paragraph using the ideas that have been generated to describe this person.

2. Students can compare popular fiction of today with that of the past.

   Prewriting

   Read Matt Helm novels and the Knights of the Round Table. How are they similar? How are they different? Does fiction of the past use basically the same appeals as that of the present? What are the techniques? You might have to use the historical and social perspectives of the times in which they were written to help set the stage to the introduction of the idea of formula in writing.

   Writing

   Using the formula that you discovered, write a short story in the vein of Matt Helm.

3. Discuss the role of the hero or heroine in today's fiction.

   Prewriting.

   What are the characteristics of the hero or heroine? What qualities seem to be necessary to fill this role? Why are

these qualities necessary for the success of the book?

Writing

Using the ideas from our discussion of the hero/heroine, develop a character sketch that would fit the qualities revealed.

4. To develop the facility in younger students to do research, develop a set of questions based on facts found in the Guiness World Book of Records. Students then use the book to find the answers and write their responses in complete sentences. A further writing assignment could then be made asking them to describe the record they would like to break and why.

5. Read to the students from the book Deadwood City by Packard. After several examples are read to the students ask them to write what they feel will happen because of the choice they have made. (This book provides the reader with options for the continuance of the book as they read.)

6. Read segments of the book Adventures of the Black Hand Gang by Hans Jorgen Press. At the end of each page or segment, a suggestion is made that part of the mystery has been solved. However, the student is not told how the members of the gang arrived at these clues. If you have the students study the pictures which are opposite the text, they can become members of the Black Hand Gang if they are observant. Students can write their observations and check themselves as to how good a detective they are at the end of the book. They might then be willing to try their hand at writing a mystery.

7. Students can capitalize on their interest in science fiction by writing a dialogue between R2D2 and C3PO. Perhaps R2D2 could describe a chance meeting he had with Darth Vader. In it he might describe his inner feelings about this encounter and disclose the topic of their discussion.

   There is also a satirical model for writing a science fiction novel in the June, 1979, edition of Omni.

8. Students could read the Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew mysteries to discover what the formula is for the writing of mystery stories. They could then write a short story using the formula for mystery.

9. Your ideas.

Footnotes

[1]Marjorie Smelstor and Carol Billman, "Pop Culture an Introduction to Literature: A Case for Teaching Westerns", Illinois English Bulletin, Spring, 1979, Vol. 66, #3, Urbana, Ill., pp. 12-13

[2]Cawelti, John G. Six Gun Mystique, Bowling Green University Popular Press, Bowling Green, Ohio, 1971, p. 27.

[3]Cawelti, John G. pp. 31-33.

Sports

The fact that sports play a very important role in society today would be very difficult to refute. Its importance becomes even more evident if we stop to examine the amount of coverage devoted to it in the media. Larger daily newspapers devote an entire section to sports coverage on all levels of competition. National television devotes between ten and twelve hours of air-time every weekend to their coverage of athletics. Look closely at local programming and how they treat sports. Regular programming is pre-empted to televise local professional, college, and high school competitions. The half-hour local news is not immune either in that approximately one-third of its time is devoted to the coverage of local and national sports.

More and more of today's youth are involved in athletic competition. Women's athletics have, perhaps, shown the greatest increases due partly to the mandates of Title IX legislation. This definitely has implications for the teacher in general and the writing teacher in particular. If sports are truly affecting society today and more students, especially girls, are participating, doesn't this area deserve some attention as a motivational element for the teaching of writing?

Reflect for a moment on your classroom. How many students can you identify sitting there that have more than a passing familiarity with sports? There are probably quite a number of them that would welcome the use of the framework of sports for their writing.

The traditional ideals and values of writing can be used within the framework of athletics without any of the traditions being shattered. The only difference is that the classic models have been abandoned in favor of a model which is of interest to the students--athletics.

The public is demanding that educators return to the basics. Isn't writing a basic skill in which students should gain competency? Doesn't this, then, become a mandate for educators to find areas which interest students and with which they feel comfortable enough to want to learn the basic skills of writing? Yes is the resounding answer. Sports may be that interest area which will motivate students to want to gain a proficiency in the communicative skill of writing.

In the section which follows suggestions are given that might be beneficial in using the idea of sports to motivate writing with your students. Important things to remember in this section are that prewriting exercises are important even though they may not be specifically noted. Also, these activities do not follow a hierarchy of skill development and could be modified for use at any grade level.

ACTIVITIES

1. Students develop rules for a game. This game might be one which is an entirely new game or one that is played by many students but doesn't seem to have formal rules.

   Prewriting

   Pose these questions for the students and record their responses on the board. What games do you enjoy playing? What are the rules for this game? For some games there may be some disagreement as to what the rules are.

   Writing

   Ask the students to, either individually or in small groups, write down the standardized rules for their game.

   Editing

   Have other students read the rules and attempt to play the game to determine the clarity of the rules. Afte. the activity they can make suggestions to the writer(s) as to how to improve the rules.

   Rewriting

   Have students work with the suggestions to develop a clearer finished product.

   Evaluation

   The clarity of the rules will become evident by the ease with which students might also want to teach their game to younger students.

2. To teach the concept of point of view, any number of writing techniques can be used, such as narrative and personification.

   Prewriting

   Read examples to the students which demonstrate the point of view technique or have the students read the material. Have them list as many of the signals as they can which show that this piece is utilizing the point of view technique. Also have them brainstorm to determine the speakers for point of view and what their point of view is. Speakers that they

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identify might be a coach, player, spectator, official, football, baseball, etc.

Writing

Choose the speaker you wish to use in developing point of view and the manner in which you want to make the presentation; i.e., dialogue, narration, etc. Then write about a sports event using as many descriptors as you can to logically embellish the writing.

Editing

Either a student or students or you can read the first draft and concentrate on the writer's use of descriptors. Be sure to make positive comments as well as suggestions for improvement.

Rewrite

The students then polish their writing by using the suggestions made in the editing process.

3. Sports can be used to teach the use of dialect.

Prewriting

Use models of dialectical speech from sports and other types of literature to introduce the concept. An example of dialectical speech might be: Mel hated the thought of facing Clyde again. Clyde had punched him out twice already that day by throwing yellowhammers at him. Mel's only concern was to get some wood on the ball so that the green flies would stay off his back while he was on the pines.

KEY: punched out = strike out; yellowhammer = a very good curve ball; green flies = a very pesty fan; pines = the bench.

Writing

Students could write dialogue, interviews, play-by-play accounts of the action and so on to show their understanding of the use of dialect.

Editing

This could be done by you or by students concentrating on the consistent use of dialectical speech patterns.

Rewrite

The student should utilize the suggestions made in the editing process to improve on their paper.

4. Students could delve into the world of fantasy by pretending they are a basketball, football, etc. and relate their views of the game or how they feel during the contest.

5. A student or group of students could attend an athletic contest and tape a play-by-play account. At a later point in time they could transcribe this account paying close attention to the rules of grammar for directly quoted speech.

6. Students can interview coaches, players, etc. about their views of the sport in which they participate. Some of the prewriting that would need to be done would be the formulation of the questions for which they would be seeking answers.

7. Students could write a narrative in which they describe their own experience as a participant at some level of competition. This narrative might include the frustrations, successes, and anxieties that they experienced.

8. Students could view a film or filmstrip of an athletic contest and write a narrative, poem, play, etc. in which they show the sequence of the event, keeping in mind the sequential development of the event.

9. Students could write the directions for how one might determine the batting average of a player, the earned run average of a pitcher, field goal percentage, etc.

10. A general discussion of sports might generate a list, such as this, of possible reports. Among the items on such a list might be the following: sportsmanship; sports as a big business; minor sports (la crosse, golf, soccer, etc.); the role of the black athlete; the athlete and his image; women in sports; and the role of the official in sports.

Miscellaneous

This category of popular culture includes almost anything and everything not included in the other categories. These things are part of the student's world. Each generation, each section of the country, each individual has a different list of what "things" are typical of today's life. These icons, or objects that are worshipped, are so familiar and so "in" that students rarely stop to think about them. Using these kinds of things in the classroom can stimulate thought-provoking observations, discussions and writing assignments. Giving the students this opportunity to anlayze their own world will teach them something about themselves, their world and, in comparisons, how and why things came to be the way they are. This should be one of the most important things we can hope to teach students.

Popular culture icons are everywhere. Using them is cheap and motivation is built in. Through the writing process -- prewriting activities, writing and editing -- there are certain philosophies that we can teach using popular culture icons. The reverse is also true; in discussing issues and promoting critical thinking we are teaching the process of writing.

Some issues that we might want the students to discuss, think about and write about are: how icons change, whether the masses create the popular culture or whether it is created for the masses, how popular culture icons affect individuals and values and whether tradition is better than modernity.

ACTIVITIES

1. To get students started and to begin for you a list of today's icons, ask your students to name some things that are typical of the world they live in. List these on the board. Generate a discussion of what these things say about us as a culture. Have each student choose one item and write about what that item means to him or her.

   Here is the beginnings of a list your students might generate.

Coke	motorcycles
Sears Roebuck catalog	bikes
telephone	roller skates
cars	computers
supermarkets	apartments
discotheques	landfill sites
disco	fashions
billboards	cosmetics
blue jeans	toys
drive-in banking	semis
drive-in eating	CBs
drive-in movies	cameras
MacDonald's	Xerox machines
neon signs	diet soft drinks
radio	T-shirts
moon rocks	posters
bumper stickers	tennis shoes

2. Toys -- using interviewing

   Have the students interview younger children and ask what their favorite toys and games are. Discuss the differences and similarities between the younger students' preferences and your students' preferences. Have the students design a toy specifically for one of the children they interviewed, and then write him or her a letter telling about the toy and why he or she should like it.

3. MacDonald's -- teaching point of view

   Discuss the nutrition of MacDonald's foods. Have students write to MacDonald's asking for nutrition information. Have another group write to a consumer magazine for the same information. Compare the two. Conclude by having the students choose a point of view, then be the MacDonald's Big Mac and describe what they are doing to the inside of a person.

4. Computers — to teach language

Have a person with a computer background or computer-related job come in and describe the language computers understand — the precision and different "words." Discuss how computer language is infiltrating our everyday language— e.g., "input," "feedback." Have the students write a dialogue between two computers or between a person and a computer.

5. Posters — for descriptive writing

Have students each bring in a favorite poster and then write a descriptive passage about their poster. See if students can match the descriptions to the correct posters. Pick out certain phrases or words that occur over and over and discuss other possibilities. Finally, have the class create a poster for their school and have each person write a description to sell the poster in the school newspaper. Vote on the best description.

6. Cars — to teach audience and need for clear, precise language

Begin by telling the students that you are having a problem with your car. You haven't time to talk with the mechanic so you need to write down what is wrong. You describe the problem very vaguely as if it could be anything. Have students help you be more precise. Then have each of them write the note to your mechanic. Have them write about this problem generally in all makes of cars to be sent to a mechanics magazine or a car magazine.

7. Bumper stickers — a sentence combining activity

Develop a sentence combining activity using a current bumper sticker. For example:

Expand this sticker slogan.

The Pack will be back.
The _____ Pack will be back.
The _____ Pack will be _____ back.
The _____ Pack will be _____ back _____.
_____ the _____ Pack will be _____ back _____.

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